

STRATEGIC AGRICULTURAL INITIATIVE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Environmental Protection Agency - Region VI

OVERVIEW INFORMATION:

- 1. Federal Agency Name:**
Environmental Protection Agency, Region VI
Multimedia Planning and Permitting Division
Pesticides Section
- 2. Funding Opportunity Title:**
Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) Strategic Agricultural Initiative Program
Request For Proposals (RFP).
- 3. Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement
- 4. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** CFDA No. 66.716 Surveys, Studies, Demonstrations, Educational Outreach and Special Projects within the Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances.
- 5. Dates:** Proposals must be postmarked on or before **May 27, 2005**. All proposals postmarked **after** this due date will **not** be considered for funding.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

EPA is soliciting proposals to help implement the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) and to support the transition to using less and lower risk pesticides in food production. The program supports innovative efforts that enable growers to decrease reliance on agricultural pesticides while maintaining economical outcomes, by developing, demonstrating and/or applying reduced risk alternatives and ecologically based integrated approaches to pest management.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Environmental Protection Agency, Multimedia Planning Division, Pesticides Section, Region VI, is requesting proposals, which will help implement requirements of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), and to support the transition to using less and lower risk pesticides in food production. The program supports innovative efforts that enable growers to decrease reliance on agricultural pesticides while maintaining economical outcomes, by developing;

demonstrating and/or applying reduced risk alternatives and ecologically based integrated approaches to pest management.

This grant program encourages “systems” approaches that integrate pest, soil and crop management practices. Although the focus is on reducing dependency on pesticides and developing alternatives to pesticides targeted under the FQPA, a broader approach to problem solving is encouraged in the development of project proposals under the FQPA Strategic Agricultural Initiative (SAI) and Section 20 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), as amended.

The goals of the FQPA’s Strategic Agricultural Initiative Grant Program are to reduce the risks and use of pesticides in agricultural settings and to rapidly spread available technology and information about ways to reduce dependence on the more highly toxic pesticides.

High Priority Areas for Consideration:

EPA will award FQPA Strategic Agricultural Initiative grants under the authority of Section 20 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) as amended by the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), for projects involving research, development, monitoring, public education, training, demonstrations and studies that address the goals of the Strategic Agricultural Initiative. These proposals should incorporate the following techniques:

1. Utilize demonstration projects, outreach and/or education to increase the adoption of integrated or sustainable agricultural production practices, which provide alternatives to pesticides impacted negatively by FQPA decisions.
2. Work collaboratively with producers, commodity groups and other stakeholders by making the best use of expert field consultants, USDA research, EPA’s safer substitutes and University technical support on alternatives and integrated pest management practices.
3. Actively engage scientists, farmers, industry, and local, State and Federal partners in the specifics of implementing FQPA.
4. Demonstrate region specific pest management technologies and integrated crop management systems to replace pesticide uses, which may be canceled under FQPA.
5. Use “farmer to farmer” training and communication methods, community participation, and/or other forms of public-private cooperation.

6. The use of sound measurement tools to monitor and record the success of the project to support the transition to using less and lower risk pesticides in food production.

Projects selected for funding will support Goal 4, Healthy Communities and Ecosystems, Objective 1, Chemical, Organism, and Pesticides Risks, Subobjective1 (Reduce Exposure to Toxic Pesticides), Subobjective 3 (Reduce Chemical and Biological Risks). Expected outputs may include the following: number of field or laboratory experiments conducted; number of field evaluations taken; number of physical samples taken and analyzed; number of persons trained, and number of training session conducted. Possible outcomes would include the reduction in the use of high-risk pesticide, pest management program utilizing reduced risk pesticides, crop and pest management practices that could reduce the exposure to pesticides.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Amount of Funding Available:

A total of approximately \$160,000 in Federal funds is available to award for projects in Region VI. Should additional funding become available for award, the Agency may award additional grants based on this solicitation and in accordance with the final selection process, without further notice of competition.

B. Funding Type:

The funding for selected award projects is in the form of a grant awarded under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).

C. Total No. of Awards:

The number of awards will depend on individual proposal cost; the final aggregate amount of Federal funding for all proposals; and the total amount of Federal funding available. Proposals for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are eligible to compete with proposals for new awards.

D. Project Period Time Frame:

The project period time frame should not exceed two (2) years.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants:

Grant funds are available to non-profit groups, including commodity groups/associations and farmers' groups, State agencies, Local Governments, Tribal Governments, Cooperative Extension, Universities, and Institutes of Higher Learning. Implementation of all projects must occur within one or more of the states of EPA Region VI (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, or Texas).

The EPA will consider only one (1) proposal by each applicant.

See Section IV. Proposal and Submission Information, Part E of this announcement for funding restrictions.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements:

There are no cost share requirements for these projects. However, matching funds are encouraged.

C. Other Eligibility Criteria:

To be eligible for consideration, applicants must meet all of the following criteria. Failure to meet the following criteria will result in the automatic disqualification of the proposal for funding consideration:

1. Be an applicant who is eligible to receive funding under this announcement;
2. The proposal must address one or more of the High Priority Areas for Consideration;
3. The proposal must meet all format and content requirements contained in this notice; and
4. The proposal must comply with the directions for submittal contained in this notice.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Address to Request Proposal Package:

Blank application forms can be obtained at the following Internet address:

<http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6md/grants.htm>

Hard paper copies of application forms can be obtained at the following address:

Environmental Protection Agency - Region VI

Attention: Eugene Thilsted

Multimedia Planning and Permitting Division – Pesticide Section

1445 Ross Avenue (6PD-P)

Dallas, TX 75202-2733

Phone: 214-665-2782 Fax: 214-665-7263

Email address: thilsted.eugene@epa.gov

B. Content and Form of Proposal Submission:

Proposals must be typewritten, double spaced in 12 point or larger print using 8.5 x 11 inch paper with minimum 1 inch horizontal and vertical margins. **One**

original hard paper copy and one electronic copy (CD-ROM, 3.5" disk or email attachment) **are required**.

Pages **must** be numbered in order starting with the cover page and continuing through the appendices. Proposals, which do not follow these format guidelines, will be eliminated from further review and will **not** be funded. All proposals must include the following with the required corresponding page numbers:

1. **Cover Page** (Page 1): Provide the following information with your letterhead.

Project Title:

Project Coordinator:

Organization Name and Address:

Telephone No.: Fax No.: Email Address:

Project Duration (including Starting Date and Ending Date):

First Year Funding Request:

Second Year Funding Request, if applicable:

Total Funding Request:

Please indicate if this proposal is a continuation of a previously EPA funded project.

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please provide the following:

EPA Assistance Number: _____

Budget Period of Project: _____

2. **Standard Form SF 424 - Application For Federal Assistance** (Page 2):
Please be sure to include organization fax number and email address in Block 5 of the Standard Form SF 424.

3. **Standard Form SF 424A - Budget Information** (Page 3 - 4):

* Blank forms can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6md/grants.htm>

4. **Detailed Itemization of the amounts budgeted by Object Class Categories** (Page 5)

5. **Table of Contents** (Page 6): A one (1) page table listing the different parts of your proposal and the page number on which each part begins.

6. **Executive Summary.** (Page 7): The Executive Summary shall be a stand alone document, not to exceed one (1) page, containing the specifics of what is proposed and what you expect to accomplish regarding measuring or movement toward achieving project goals. This summary should identify the measurable environmental results you expect including potential human health and ecological benefits.

7. ***Proposal Narrative.*** Includes parts I - VI. (Parts I through VI listed below are not to exceed ten (10) pages). These pages should be numbered beginning with Page 8. If more than ten (10) pages of proposal narrative are submitted, the additional pages will be disregarded and not considered for review.
- a. **Part I: Project Title.** Self explanatory.
 - b. **Part II: Objectives.** A numbered list (1, 2, etc.) of concisely written project objectives. In most cases, each objective can be stated in a single sentence.
 - c. **Part III: Justification.** For each objective listed in Part II above, discuss the potential outcome in terms of environmental, human health, pesticide risk and/or use reduction or pollution prevention. If appropriate, the target pest(s) and crop(s) should be explicitly stated. This section should be numbered with a justification corresponding to each objective.
 - d. **Part IV: Literature Review.** Briefly describe relevant information currently available. This should also include information on projects currently in progress that are relevant to or provide the basis for either the experimental design or the validation of a new approach to pest management.
 - e. **Part V: Approach and Methods.** Describe in detail how the program will be carried out. Describe how the system or approach will support the program goals.
 - f. **Part VI: Impact Assessment.** Please state how you will evaluate the success of the program in terms of measurable environmental results. How and with what measures will humans or ecosystems be better protected as a result of the program.
9. ***Proposal Appendices.*** These appendices must be included in the grant proposal. Additional appendices are not permitted. Continue page numbering as appropriate after Part VI.
- a. **Appendix A. Literature Cited.** List cited key literature references alphabetically by author.
 - b. **Appendix B. Timetable.** A timetable that includes what will be accomplished under each of the objectives during the project and when completion of each objective is anticipated.

- c. **Appendix C. Major Participants.** This appendix should list all farmers, farm organizations, researchers, educators, and conservationists and others having a major role in the proposal. Provide name, organizational affiliation or occupation (such as farmer) and a description of the role each will play in the project. A brief resume (not to exceed two pages) should be submitted for each major researcher or other educator.

C. Submission Date:

Proposals must be postmarked on or before **May 27, 2005**. All proposals postmarked **after** this due date will **not** be considered for funding.

All proposals should be sent or delivered to:

Environmental Protection Agency - Region VI
Attention: Eugene Thilsted
Multimedia Planning and Permitting Division – Pesticide Section
1445 Ross Avenue (6PD-P)
Dallas, TX 75202-2733
Email address: thilsted.eugene@epa.gov

To be considered, both an original hard paper copy and an electronic copy must be received by the due date.

The electronic copy should be e-mailed to: thilsted.eugene@epa.gov or submitted on a CD-ROM or a 3.5" disk, IBM compatible, and readable in MS Word or WordPerfect WP6/7/8 for Windows to the address indicated above. The electronic copy should be consolidated into a single file.

CD-ROM's or Disks will be checked for computer viruses. Proposals that are submitted with viruses will be disqualified.

D. Intergovernmental Review:

Applicants must comply with the Intergovernmental Review Process and/or consultation provisions of Executive Order 12372 or Section 204 of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act, if applicable, which are contained in 40 CFR Part 29. Further information regarding this requirement will be provided if your proposal is selected for funding.

E. Funding Restrictions:

Award will not allow for the reimbursement of pre-award costs.

Allowable Costs:

EPA grant funds may only be used for the purposes set forth in the grant agreement, and must be consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Grant funds may not be used for matching funds for other Federal grants, lobbying, or intervention in Federal regulatory or adjudicatory

proceedings. In addition, Federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal government or any other government entity. All costs identified in the budget must conform to applicable Federal Cost Principles contained in OMB Circular A-87; A-122; and A-21, as appropriate.

F. Other Submission Requirements:

Pre-proposal Assistance:

None planned.

Conferences/Workshops:

If a conference or workshop is an element of the project, the applicant will also be required to answer the following questions:

Who is initiating the conference/workshop/meeting? How will it be advertised? Whose logo will be on the agenda and materials? What is the percentage of participants, i.e., federal, state, local or public? Will the grant recipient prepare the proceedings and disseminate the information back to the targeted community? Will program income be generated from this event?

Any project surveys will be required to provide measurable outcomes.

V. PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Criteria:

All proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria and weights:

1. Qualification and experience of the applicant relative to the proposed project activity. Weighting: 15 Points
2. Project proposal is consistent with the goals of the FQPA Strategic Agricultural Initiative. <http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/> Weighting: 20 Points
3. Provisions for measuring and documenting the project's results quantitatively and qualitatively. http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/performance_measures.html
<http://www.aftresearch.org/sai/public/> Weighting: 15 Points
4. Environmental Results – The applicant's plan for tracking and measuring its progress towards achieving the expected outputs and outcomes identified in Section I of the announcement. Weighting: 15 points
5. Likelihood that the project can be replicated in other areas by other organizations to benefit their communities. Weighting: 15 Points
6. Project involves the partnership between universities, private researchers, non-governmental organizations, Regional Pest Management Centers, minor crop growers and other agencies. Weighting: 5 Points

7. Project uses a whole systems approach, which integrates pest, soil, and crop management practices. Weighting: 5 Points
8. Project uses outreach effectively in furthering grower education, innovation and technology transfer. Weighting: 5 Points
9. Project utilizes matching or leveraged funds. Weighting: 3 Points
10. Project's budget outline is acceptable and demonstrates the effective and judicious use of Federal funds. Weighting: 2 Points

Total: 100 Points

The funding decision will be made from the group of top rated proposals based on the following additional factors:

- A. Region VI's environmental priorities, which include preventing pollution from one media to another and to strive toward the reduction or elimination of environmental contamination.
- B. The extent of anticipated environmental impact of the project in Region VI.

B. Review and Selection Process:

Applicants will be screened to ensure that they meet all eligibility criteria and will be disqualified if they do not meet the criteria. All proposals that meet the eligibility criteria will be reviewed, evaluated and ranked by a selected panel of EPA reviewers based on the above evaluation criteria and weighting.

The Region VI, Section Chief, Pesticides Section will make the final selection of initial proposals.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices:

The Region VI EPA office will email acknowledgments to applicants upon receipt of the proposal. Once proposals have been reviewed, evaluated and ranked, applicants will be notified via U.S. Mail regarding the outcome of the competition. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance on the selected project(s). The notice of award sent via U.S. Mail to the applicant's authorized representative and signed by the EPA award official is the authorizing document.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Additional Forms:

An applicant whose proposal is selected for Federal funding must complete additional forms prior to award (see 40 CFR 30.12 and 31.10).

Applicable Regulations:

These projects are subject to EPA's General Grant Regulations: 40 CFR Part 30 "Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations" and 40 CFR Part 31 "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments," as applicable. Applicants will also be subject to the requirements of 40 CFR 32 regarding debarment, suspension and a drug-free workplace.

Procurement:

Once a proposal is selected, the recipient may be required to submit before award, in addition to a full application, a copy of its written procurement procedures developed in accordance with 40 CFR 30.40 - 30.48 or 40 CFR 31.36, as applicable, for review.

Indirect Costs:

If a nonprofit organization or educational institute does not have a previously established indirect cost rate, it will need to prepare and submit an indirect cost rate proposal and/or cost allocation plan in accordance with the appropriate Federal cost principle, OMB Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations" or OMB Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions" within ninety (90) from the effective date of the award. If a local government or state agency does not have a previously established indirect cost rate, it will need to prepare its indirect cost rate proposal and/or cost allocation plan in accordance with OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments." The local government or state agency recipient whose cognizant Federal agency has been designated by OMB must develop and submit its indirect cost rate proposal to its cognizant agency within six (6) months after the close of the governmental unit's fiscal year. If the cognizant Federal agency has not been identified by the OMB, the local government recipient must still develop (and when required, submit) its proposal within that period.

DUNS Requirement:

A new requirement (policy directive) from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for grant applicants took effect on October 1, 2003, which requires grant applicants to provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements. A DUNS number must be included in every application (electronic or paper). The DUNS number must be included in Block 5 of the Standard Form 424 entitled, Application for Federal Assistance (Rev. 9-03) Organizations can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711. Additional information on obtaining a DUNS number can also be found at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/dunnumguide.pdf>.

C. Reporting:

The successful applicant(s) will be required to submit quarterly progress reports throughout the duration of the project. Progress reports are due 30 days post each quarter. Reports should include a description of project activities including accomplishments, successes and lessons learned along with any problems and/or delays. Environmental outcomes should be indicated in relation to the approved schedule and milestones. A final project report is also required 90 days following the end of the project period according to the same format. All reports can be submitted either electronically or by hard paper copy.

D. Disputes:

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1371.htm>.

Copies of these procedures may also be requested by contacting Mr. Eugene Thilsted at thilsted.eugene@epa.gov or telephone 214-665-2782.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT

Eugene Thilsted, EPA Region VI Strategic Agricultural Initiative Coordinator, at:

Telephone: 214-665-2782

Fax: 214-665-2782

Email: thilsted.eugene@epa.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION**Confidential Business Information:**

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their application/proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark applications/proposals or portions of applications/proposals they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure.

Applicants should clearly mark information contained in their proposal, which they consider confidential business information. EPA reserves the right to make final confidentially decisions in accordance with Agency regulations at 40 CFR Part 2, Subpart B. If no such claim accompanies the proposal when it is received by the EPA, it may be made available to the public by the EPA without further notice to the applicant.

EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards.